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Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Concluding observations on the initial report of Cyprus

Addendum

Information received from Cyprus on follow-up to the concluding observations*

[Date received: 18 May 2018]

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

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Informative note regarding paragraphs 26, 28, 58 of the concluding observations of the UN Committee on the rights of persons with disabilities on the initial report of Cyprus

Paragraph 26

"*The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen its efforts to improve accessibility, including by increasing the allocation of human, technical and financial resources and applying internationally recognized standardization with a view to ensure accessibility to public and private indoor and outdoor environments, information, communication and emergency services as well as professional sign language interpretation, and augmentative and alternative communication in both rural and urban areas. The Committee furthermore recommends that the State party significantly strengthen monitoring of compliance with these regulations as well as systematically enforce sanctioning for non-compliance. In so doing, the State party should be guided by the Sustainable Development Goals, especially target 11.7, as well as by General Comment No. 2 (2014).*"

1. Cyprus has enhanced its efforts to improve accessibility to the public and private natural and built environment, information, communication and alternative forms of communication and to emergency services.

2. Regarding accessibility to the public and private natural and built environment the following regulations were published in July 2017 in the Official Gazette of the Republic: (a) Law 111 (I)/2017 which amended the Streets and Buildings Regulations Law, and (b) Regulations 248/2017 which amended the Streets and Buildings Regulations enriching and modernizing the regulation 61H "Use of buildings by persons with disabilities. Regulations 248/2017 introduce a comprehensive and up-to-date regulatory text on technical specifications and requirements for roads and buildings, in relation to safe access and use by all persons, including persons with a disability. The new legislative frame, defines the general design principles for buildings used as residential and non-residential buildings, pavements and pedestrian areas and squares.

3. The Department of Public Works continues to ensure that all new projects under its jurisdiction (buildings housed by Government Services, primary roads of the urban network, interurban — rural roads, cycling routes, etc.) meet all applicable legislation that concerns accessibility of persons with disabilities. Efforts are also made to ensure that, depending on available state funds, existing public buildings, with public priority, become accessible where this is feasible for construction, as well as existing roads maintained by the Department become progressively accessible to all.

4. Regarding accessibility to information, communication and alternative forms of communication, Cyprus Radio television Authority (CRTA) has made several contacts with broadcasters regarding the provisions of article 30B (3) of The Radio and Television Broadcasters Law of 1998 to 2017. The article states that: "*Following consultations with the Authority, media service providers shall submit a schedule to the Authority within a period of one year from the entry into force of this section, setting out specific methods for gradual increase of the percentage of their programmes, by at least 5% in addition to the news bulletin, which shall be accessible to people with a visual or hearing disability*". Beyond that, Broadcasters apply only the provisions of article 30B (2) which states that: "*Each broadcaster is obliged to broadcast between the hours of 18.00–22.00 special newscast comprehensible by deaf people, at least for five minutes: It is provided that the view of the above mentioned special news takes at least half of the TV screen*".

5. In the most recent meeting held on 23/04/2018 at the offices of the Cyprus Broadcasting Authority, the broadcasters discussed possible ways of securing European funds to help TV organizations make the necessary adjustments to their programs and decided to coordinate and continue with a proposal for further accessibility measures, especially for people with hearing and visual disabilities.

6. Furthermore, the Press and Information Office, as the governmental agency responsible for communications and implementation of the Press Law, is in the process of studying ways to meet all necessary requirements. Several public services continue to upgrade their websites, in coordination with the Department for Information Technology Service according to web accessibility standards.

7. Regarding accessibility to emergency services, the Civil Defense Force, as the governmental agency responsible for the Emergency Services, has taken the following actions:

(a) Inform at every opportunity its members (staff, volunteers, obligated defendants) of the "Tripos" Project, which concerns the management of people with disabilities in emergency cases. At the same time, the Force has updated the main Services involved in the Plan (Police, Fire Brigade and Ambulance Service) for better coordination;

(b) Conducting training for organic executives to improve their training and training on managing disabled people in emergencies;

(c) Press conference and enlightenment campaign was held in 2017 to inform people with disabilities about their ability to be included in the Force Register, in order to enable early detection and appropriate assistance in case of need;

(d) The training program for our obligated defendants for 2018 includes courses on "Civil Defense Plans", including the "Tripos" project. At the same time, during the relevant training, the disability-related form is distributed to trainees, so that the obligators can properly inform and distribute the form to people in their close environment;

(e) Relevant information is provided to people with disabilities through the Force Site, from where they can obtain the relevant form and fill in appropriately;

(f) Civil Defense Force continues to maintain an electrical register, which is handled by appropriately authorized persons, and which includes information provided on a voluntary basis by persons with disabilities. The appropriately completed register facilitates the detection and care of disabled people in cases of disasters or other emergencies.

8. Furthermore, the Department of Electromechanical Services has upgraded the Emergency Call Management Center at the Police Headquarters in order to be able to receive emergency messages by means of a relevant application on telephones and short text messages.

Paragraph 28

"*The Committee recommends that the State party, guided by General Comment No. 2 (2014) and target 11.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals ensure access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport for all, including persons with disabilities regardless of their type of impairment. In particular it recommends that the State party ensure that all new public means of transport are incorporated into the public transport system by ensuring full accessibility and to prohibit charges for bringing along wheelchairs and other necessary devices into a taxi and other public transportation.*"

9. The Department of Public Works, in the context of improving access to Public Passenger Transport, has designed and implemented the following:

(a) ITS — Telematics Project in all Pancyprian buses: This includes access to information for persons with disabilities through (i) Website AA, (ii) Mobile Application for personalized information, (iii) Bus communication announcements, (iv) 30 Electronic Signs of Public Information at selected stops (v) Ability to activate a Needed Bus mode and receive a panic button event signal;

(b) Diavlos-Upgrade through co-funded Crocodile I-II: This includes the upgrading of the Website to AA for traffic data and parking.

10. The Department of Road Transport has adopted the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Act of 1972 (Law 86/1972, according to which the persons with disabilities are

exempt from the registration fees and the registration taxes for their motor vehicle. Persons with disabilities are also exempted from paying fees for their vehicle inspection if it is presented for periodical technical inspection at any TOM Motor Vehicle Control Center. It is noted that persons with disabilities may obtain a driving license if they are able to drive a motor vehicle and where appropriate the vehicle is adapted according to their disability.

Paragraph 58

"*The Committee recommends that the State party expeditiously take legislative amendments to guarantee to all persons with disabilities the right to vote and to stand for election and to collect reliable and disaggregated data regarding their exercise of these rights.*"

11. There is no restriction on the right to vote, while facilities are provided, both through the prerogatives of electoral law and practical arrangements for the exercise of this right. As far as the right to be elected, there is also no restriction in general for people with disabilities, only to persons suffering from mental illness which makes them unable to perform duties, such as those of the President or Vice-President of the Republic or as Members of Parliament, as provided for in Articles 40 and 64 of the Constitution, provisions which are not expected to be amended.

12. Finally, regarding the issue of data collection, of those specific rights, of people with disabilities, there is complete lack of data on any category of voters, a weakness resulting from the lack of computerization beyond the age and sex composition of the electorate.